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**Review of "Livia Gaudino-Fallegger. I dimostrativi nell'italiano parlato.
Wilhelmsfeld, Egert (1992)"**

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Book reviews

Livia Gaudino-Fallegger, *I dimostrativi nell'italiano parlato*. Wilhelmsfeld: Gottfried Egert Verlag, 1992, 291 p., DM 36.00.

The book under review, written as a Ph.D. dissertation at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt (Germany), is an empirical study of the use of demonstratives in spoken Italian. It makes a contribution to a debate prompted by Italian linguists in the 1980s, i.e., the question of the extent to which the grammar of spoken Italian differs from that of written Italian. The book can be divided into a more theoretical part, embracing chapters one to three (on deixis, spoken language, and the grammatical description of demonstratives), and an empirical part – chapters four to seven – concerning the occurrences of demonstratives in a corpus of spoken language. The analysis of the corpus is both quantitative and qualitative: frequencies of the different forms are compared with data from other sources,¹ and numerous examples illustrate the different discourse functions covered by demonstratives in spoken language.

The theoretical part begins with a discussion of 'deixis' and 'anaphora', offering a review of the various definitions and subtypes proposed for these notions (such as 'textual deixis', 'Deixis am Phantasma', etc.). Given the considerable terminological and conceptual proliferation in this domain of linguistic theory, the author chooses to abandon the deixis-anaphora dichotomy, instead adopting Halliday's notions of 'exophora' (reference to the extralinguistic context) and 'endophora' (reference to the linguistic context). Chapter 2 deals with the role of spoken language in the history of Italian linguistics, as well as with the dimensions of sociolinguistic variation in the Italian language today; the author shares the widely-accepted assumption that 'spoken Italian' may be considered a variety on its own, one which exhibits both universal patterns of oral communication and language-specific morphosyntactic features. The third chapter reviews the way in which demonstratives are treated in fifteen grammars of Italian.

Somewhat simplifying the rather complex linguistic facts, this part of Italian grammar may be outlined as follows: the two basic demonstratives, *questo* 'this' and *quello* 'that',² occur both as nouns and as determiners. In spoken language, these forms are sometimes reinforced by the local adverbs

qui/qua 'here' and *lì/là* 'there' (also classified among the demonstratives by Gaudino); *questo* also has an allegro allomorph *sto*. However, according to traditional grammar, standard Italian and Tuscan have a triadic system, consisting of *questo* (near the speaker), *codesto* (near the hearer), and *quello* (distant from both the speaker and the hearer). Finally, there is a 'neuter' nominal demonstrative *ciò*, which refers only to sentences or parts of texts.

In chapters 4 and 5, Gaudino sets out to examine the distribution of these demonstrative forms and to discover their functions in a corpus of transcribed television and radio broadcasts (interviews, discussions, plays), and obtains some quite interesting results (which, for obvious reasons, can be reported only in part here). As was to be expected, demonstratives are more widely used in spoken language than in written texts, but there are considerable differences with regard to the different forms. Compared with the data of LIF, the relative frequency of *questo* in Gaudino's corpus is 2.53, and that of *quello* only 1.24. It thus follows that, in Italian, *questo* 'this' functions as the unmarked demonstrative, whereas in English, *that* is considered the unmarked form (cf. Lyons 1977: 647). Quite surprisingly, the variants *sto* and *questo qui* 'this here' – which typically belong to spoken Italian but do not usually appear in written texts – have a very low frequency (pp. 120–121): while *questo* occurs 609 times, *sto* and *questo qui* show only 11 viz. 21 tokens. If one considers that *quello lì* also has only 7 of the overall 291 occurrences of *quello*, there seems to be no tendency to replace the simple forms with their reinforced variants. The neuter *ciò* has a slightly lower frequency in Gaudino's corpus than in LIF (the ratio is 0.86), but it is not excluded from spoken Italian, especially in more formal discourse.

A comparison with the much larger LIP-database reveals that Gaudino's results are highly representative (the LIP contains 500,000 tokens, covering four different cities and five different text types, whereas Gaudino has 46,000 tokens, recorded mainly in Turin and representing one text type): both the ratio between *questo* and *quello* (2.09 in Gaudino, and 2.31 in LIP) and the percentage of the aphaeretic *sto*-form among the total occurrences of *questo* (+ allomorphs) are very similar: 1.77 percent in Gaudino, and 3.37 percent in LIP. Also, the frequencies of *ciò* in relation to the entire corpora are much the same: 0.03 in Gaudino, and 0.02 in LIP. Unfortunately, the published LIP-lists do not permit one to single out the frequency of the reinforced *questo qui*-variants.

In chapter 6, Gaudino reports the results of a metalinguistic experiment she ran with a number of Tuscan speakers in order to elicit the third demonstrative *codesto*: the informants had to fill in the demonstrative forms in the captions of picture stories (comics, photographs). Even if the elicited responses for *codesto* are rather high as an artefact of the experiment, they rarely attain the same percentage as *questo* or *quello*. The author concludes

that *codesto* may be regarded as a regional variant of *questo* or *quello*, which serves as an ethnic marker for Florentine speakers. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that Italian never had a triadic demonstrative system, regardless of the attempts to introduce it in nineteenth-century grammar books.

As to the functions of demonstratives, another important finding of this study is that the endophoric uses are much more important than exophoric ones. This is partly due to the particular text type of the corpus (argumentative discourse rather than face-to-face interaction) and not to the intrinsic character of spoken language, as the author herself remarks. Thus, even in spoken language, the main function of demonstratives is not to 'point' at objects in the physical world, but to guarantee the cohesion of discourse. They furthermore serve to signal particular constituents of the utterance which are under focus, and to express the speaker's attitude towards human referents: for instance, *questo qui* 'this here' invades the sphere of the personal pronoun *lui* 'he' when the speaker wants to mark social distance.

Gaudino's study provides us with a large amount of interesting language data and raises several important questions about the grammatical description of demonstratives. Nevertheless, some critical remarks are called for, beginning with some purely formal observations. First, her scientific prose is sometimes rather complicated and somewhat old-fashioned, and there are even a few errors: for instance, the noun *specie* 'species' is invariable (a plural form *speci*, p. 217, does not exist). Then, some of the references are given only in the footnotes and not in the final bibliography (e.g., Berruto 1983, quoted on p. 59, or the contributions to Renzi's grammar), while others are lacking altogether: Mioni (1975), Mioni (1979), Sanga (1978), Sobrero Romanello (1981), Canepari (1983), De Mauro (1980) (all from pp. 66-67). Moreover, the review of the sociolinguistic literature in chapter two is not exhaustive, since important contributions (such as Berruto 1987) are not taken into account.

Instead of the meticulous definitions of deixis and anaphora that are not used later on, the reader would have preferred to be given some more indications about concepts underlying the analysis of the data, especially those related to the information structure of utterances, such as topic-comment, given-new, focus, etc. Quite in contradiction to the generally pursued form-to-function approach (which aims at interpreting the sense of utterances on the basis of contextual information), the continuous comparison with the standard language sometimes leads the author to adopt a rather prescriptive attitude. Not only are several occurrences of demonstratives described as 'redundant', but in some cases it is even affirmed that

speakers 'should have chosen' another form or that they 'exaggeratedly' mark a particular linguistic expression (p. 140).

Furthermore, there are some problematic details regarding the strictly grammatical analysis. For instance, in her critique of the traditional conception of pronouns as words which 'substitute' for nouns (p. 47), Gaudino seems to confuse semantic and syntactic aspects, and she fails to highlight the fact that 'pronouns' actually have the distribution of noun phrases (and are therefore to be considered pro-NPs). By claiming that nouns are not replaced but 'intended' by pronouns, she arrives at a less than convincing syntactic analysis, according to which NPs consisting of a sole demonstrative have an underlying 'elliptic' noun. Later on (p. 192), it is maintained that, in a sentence like *questa è la dichiarazione* 'this is the declaration', the demonstrative *questa* agrees in number and gender with the 'nominal predicate' *è la dichiarazione*. Now, either the demonstrative is the subject, and therefore the agreement is the other way round; or – as seems to be more plausible – it belongs itself to the predicate, and *la dichiarazione* functions as the subject.

However, these are very specific observations which one may agree with or not. All in all, the book is an in-depth study of a particular grammatical area, and it contributes to a better understanding of spoken Italian. Among the results which may particularly interest researchers are the higher frequency and unmarkedness of *questo* as opposed to *quello*, the marginal role of *codesto* even in the competence of Tuscan speakers, the very limited frequency of the variants *sto* and *questo qui* in spoken Italian, and the clear predominance of endophoric over exophoric uses of demonstratives in oral communication.

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Notes

1. The author mainly considers the first corpus of spoken Italian, collected in Florence by H. Stammerjohann (1970), and the *Lessico di frequenza della lingua italiana contemporanea* (LIF), based on written texts and published in 1971. A frequency lexicon of spoken Italian, the so-called LIP (De Mauro et al. 1993), appeared only one year after the publication of Gaudino's book, so she was not able to take these data into account.
2. For the sake of simplicity, I always use the masculine singular citation forms, but the following observations refer to the whole paradigms, including forms like *questa* (f.sg.), *questi* (m.pl.), and *queste* (f.pl.), as well as the minor (morphologically determined) allomorphs like *quest'*, *quell'* or *quegli*.

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Norbert Dittmar and Astrid Reich (eds.), *Modality in Language Acquisition (Modalité et acquisition des langues)*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993, 382 pp.

This collection discusses modality and second language acquisition from a variety of points of view, intended to contribute to the theoretical understanding of modality on the basis of empirical analysis. German and Polish are the primary focus, though French, English and Antiguan Creole feature also. Papers appear in English or French, while the introduction curiously switches between the two. Each paper has an abstract in the complementary language, though examples are not consistently glossed. The book features a general introduction and three parts, each with an introduction by the editors, a common bibliography, index and list of contributors (though no e-mail addresses are provided).

Part I treats modal structures in languages and language varieties. Following an informative section introduction there is a theoretical chapter on the function and form of modality in discourse by Christiane von Stutterheim, based on authentic narratives and instructions. This central chapter illustrates the organisational characteristics of narratives and the implicit nature of modality in utterances, relative to more explicitly coded temporal relations. Eddy Roulet provides (in French) a taxonomy of propositional modalisers in verbal interaction, highlighting the differences between markers of subjectivity (*point de vue*), implicit markers of illocutionary force, and hedges. Andrzej Katny discusses lexical and grammatical exponents of modality contrastively in Polish and German. Benji Wald produces a comprehensive study of *would* and other modals in spoken English in Los Angeles, illustrating the variety of modals competing

within one speech community and factors (such as transfer from Spanish or general linguistic principles) affecting choices amongst modal options. This chapter contributes significantly to the discussion of the development of modals in the United States (cf. Fennell and Butters 1996). Anna Dutka discusses (in French) the argumentative connectors *ale*, *a* and *i* in Polish. Oswald Ducrot's contribution highlights the importance of the notion of *prise de position* ('assumption of position') in argumentation, and deepens our understanding of the difficulties inherent in the definition of modality.

Part II treats modality in first language acquisition. Ursula Stephany provides a useful overview, while Magdalena Soczynska treats the acquisition of Polish modal verbs. Susan Shepherd deals with the acquisition of modality in Antigua Creole, adding to a handful of important recent studies on modality in creoles (cf. Christie 1991). Champaud et al. consider (in French) the acquisition of epistemic modality and reported speech by French children, demonstrating the relatively late acquisition of expressions of certainty and uncertainty.

Part III deals with modality in second language acquisition. Norbert Dittmar's chapter on the acquisition of modality by a Polish immigrant learner of German is one of three papers emanating from the P-MoLL project of the Freie Universität in Berlin, a motivating force in the collection as a whole. Dittmar discusses the acquisition of modality in L2 within the framework of Hopper's notion of emergent grammars, and, following Givón, he demonstrates that learners organise words pragmatically, rather than morphosyntactically. Importantly, Dittmar introduces the notion of the modal 'joker', a kind of polyfunctional archiform used in conversational interaction to compensate for a general lack of modal expressions. Heiner Terborg provides a useful account of the elaboration of the modal lexicon in German as a second language, while Romuald Skuba investigates the syntactic characteristics of modal verbs in elementary learner varieties. The P-MoLL team find in general that the simple division of modality into epistemic (= logical probability) and deontic (social interactional) suffices for a developmental study such as theirs.

Completing the German section, Bert-Olaf Rieck examines conditionals in learner varieties of German. Henriette Stoffel and Daniel Veronique subsequently treat the acquisition of French modals and the process of modalisation by adult speakers of Moroccan Arabic. Mireille Prodeau deals with acquiring the means to give instructions in a foreign language, referring particularly to the function of prescribing action and the notion of face so central to the social interactional use of modals (reminiscent of the work of Margaret Mishoe and Michael Montgomery on double modals in US English). Finally, Françoise Hickel discusses strategic profiles and the linguistic development of modality and argumentation (also in French). One

major, though hardly surprising, finding unifying parts II and III is that deontic modals are acquired in the first and second language before epistemic modals. The major advantage here, as with the rest of the individual findings, is the solid empirical basis presented across a range of languages. The book has a very broad appeal, to those interested in the theoretical aspects of modality, as well as those interested in general first and second language acquisition or a specific first or second language, and researchers in discourse analysis, language variation and sociolinguistics in general.

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Efurosibina Adegbiya, *Language Attitudes in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Socio-linguistic Overview*. Clevedon: Multilingua Matters, 1994, viii + 130 pp., £24.95.

This book deals primarily with the attitudes towards languages used in sub-Saharan Africa, both autochthonous and European. Obviously, there is still much respect offered the various European tongues since no indigenous African language, excluding Arabic, is used as a medium in university higher education, for instance, the only exception being for courses in languages and/or linguistics. The author is quite pessimistic, and rightly so, I might add, about the aforementioned state of affairs, and states: 'Well over thirty years after the independence of most African countries, it is sad to observe that an African tradition in the educational, political, judicial (sic) domains, mass communication, etc. has failed to emerge' (p. 98). Another book exploring why this is so would be a most welcome addition to sociolinguistics.

I agree with Adegbiya that the economies of African countries are, of necessity, tied to the pound, dollar, mark, or franc, the mass media are Western-oriented, and thus, many or perhaps most people consider French or

English to be superior to their own natively spoken African language. Africans, on the whole, do not use an indigenous African language in education beyond primary school because of the negative attitudes held concerning that particular language or dialect. However, it is interesting to note the continuum of negative views, i.e., that some African languages are more prestigious (for a variety of reasons) than their neighboring ones. For example, Kiswahili is evaluated more favorably than any other indigenous language in Tanzania, and Hausa's prestige as a lingua franca in Nigeria has been increasing, while minority or small languages suffer from a negative prestige factor. This explains why bigger languages get bigger and smaller languages become smaller. To put this in proper historical perspective, there can be little doubt that Hausa has gobbled up many other Chadic languages over the course of the past century or more in and around present-day Nigeria. It is also important to point out, reflecting globally on the matter, that it seems rather certain most of today's 5,000 or so languages will disappear in the next century.

This volume presents many interesting facts about language usage throughout Africa. We read, for example, that Arabic and Tigrinya are the official languages of Eritrea, whereas the Revised Ethiopian Constitution of 1955 declared Amharic to be the sole official, national language of the country. These facts assist in the proper understanding of recent Ethiopian history, as, quite naturally, one can comprehend the resentment generated against Amharic speakers by other linguistic groups (p. 38). The author has also commented on the language situation in Somalia and Algeria (pp. 38–39). In a firm endorsement of Arabization, the Algerian National Assembly passed a 1990 law in which 'documents in any language other than Arabic are to be null and void as of July 5, 1992' (p. 39). Turning to a discussion of South Africa, however, Hindi and Urdu are mentioned and are considered two separate languages, a hypothesis which most linguists would reject (p. 16).

The overall point of the book, aptly demonstrated especially for Nigeria, is that every sub-Saharan African country maintains some kind of linguistic connection with its former colonial ruler(s). There are many details presented in these pages which demonstrate the author's thorough knowledge of Africa as a linguistic area. I can recommend the tome as a thorough exploration of its subject matter, as is evidenced by a well-chosen, if somewhat lengthy, bibliography (pp. 122–130).

Michael Agar, *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 284 pp., \$22.00.

My first reaction to *Language Shock* is to exclaim 'What a wonderfully interesting book!' just as my first word to a proud mother who pushes me towards her one-month old baby with stick-outy ears would be, 'Now, *that's* a baby!' How can you not love it? What can you say about its shortcomings, and, perhaps more to the point, why say anything about them at all?

Michael Agar's book is a first and a much-needed easy-going comprehensive treatment of linguistic anthropology, a hot-fudge-sundae introduction to the field, one that satisfies with some moderately nutritious ideas swimming in rich autobiographical anecdotes, sprinkled with a few nuts to provide interest and texture. I have experimented with it in our linguistic anthropology courses where students rarely jump toward the study of language study or show any inclination for handling the abstract debates that such study engenders. With interests that are generally concrete, applied, and commonsensical, my students have usually been nonplussed by the writings of formalists à la Chomsky, functionalists à la Dennett, and heteroglossists à la Bakhtin. But, now I see that they do better when coaxed toward the full plate of language study with initial tidbits that are softer and more palatable. Here, Agar's book fills the bill. What it says well, it says very well. And when it goes astray, it provides wonderful opportunities for enlightening discussion.

The thread of this book works its way through the twentieth century, from Saussurean structuralism to Boasian culturalism and then on into the latter-day contextualism of speech act analysis, frame analysis, and the ethnography of speaking. Like John Doe's *Speak Into the Mirror* – a kindred book that, while comparably broad, carries a chip on its shoulder (reviewed in *Multilingua* 14, p. 431) – *Language Shock* criticizes Saussure for his structuralist idealizations, but celebrates the efforts of Malinowski and the Boasians to open language analysis to context, and applauds the subsequent contextualist trends that have been advanced by ethnoscientists in the 1960s, by ethnographers of speaking in the 1970s, and by ethnomethodologists in the 1980s. It is to Agar's credit that he manages to introduce such salient analytic notions as descriptive versus prescriptive approaches, synchrony and diachrony, paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis, case grammar, adjacency pairs, and speech acts without ever disturbing the easy flow of his conversational writing style. What he avoids, as if it were a precipice too frightful to countenance, is all critical reflection on the theoretical underpinnings of contextual analysis, dependent as it is on the hermeneutic and structuralist principles that have been pilloried by poststructuralists. On this count, Doe's book is more honest and forthright for discussing the cul de sac at the end of the road called context.

Continually surfacing throughout Agar's discussion are the concepts of 'circle' and 'rich points'. The 'circle' around language is his way of describing the Saussurean idealizations that sanitize phonemes, morphemes, and syntactic patterns, thereby setting them up for analysis. Agar contends that 'the circle wasn't necessary' (p. 47) and that Saussure would have done better to open up his analysis to the messiness of verbal practice, 'language as it naturally flows' (p. 160), though this last expression prompts me to wonder what language looks like when it flows unnaturally. This argument about the 'circle' is disingenuous insofar as it conceals the fact that the seminal notions of binary opposition and privative definition in phonology could never have emerged without the structuralist idealization he calls 'the circle'. What is more, the idea of context, with its frames, competing as they sometimes do to produce 'rich points' in experience, could never have been addressed analytically without 'the circle', because contextual analysis involves repeated drawings of larger concentric circles around increasingly more complex systems each of which is then subjected to the same sort of structural analysis as the primary system at the epicenter of grammar.

But these theoretical issues are precisely the ones that can be supplemented with basic readings and classroom discussions once the students' interests have been whetted by Agar's descriptions of the practices of drug users, of truck drivers, of skindivers in Hawaii, businessmen in Mexico, lawyers in Thailand, and ironists in Vienna. These, after all, are the topics that titillate. How can one not fail to be engaged by the tragic story of the Green Beret Bruce Spivey who was so frustrated in his efforts to talk about the horrors of the Vietnam war that he found himself unable to continue living? And how can one not learn from the analysis of Kurt Waldheim's repartee with a journalist, an interview that struck such sharply contrasting chords in the hearts of two generations of Austrians? Such rich and sensitive and smoothly rendered discussions make *Language Shock* a powerful draw and wonderfully interesting overture that any student of anthropology can read with great profit. Its promise lies in the possibility that readers will progress from appetizer to entrée, moving beyond this enticing sketch to engage the full bore debate that currently rattles contemporary circles of language study.

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